

VZCZCXRO7726
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHTV #0281/01 0361546
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 051546Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5348
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 000281

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2020

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR ARAD ARTICULATES ISRAELI
FOREIGN POLICY SUCCESSES

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Luis G. Moreno, reasons 1.4 (b),
(d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a February 5 article in the Israeli newspaper Yisrael Ha-yom, National Security Advisor Uzi Arad articulated the Netanyahu Government's foreign policy successes over the past year, including helping prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and promoting negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Arad's foreign policy article may in part represent a response to critics who panned PM Netanyahu's February 3 speech at the Herzliya Conference for its lack of foreign policy focus. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) In an unusual article in the February 5 edition of the Israeli newspaper Yisrael Ha-yom, National Security Advisor Uzi Arad laid out the Netanyahu Government's foreign policy successes over the last year. Arad noted that in the political sphere, if something is "not publicized, the likelihood that it will happen increases." In this respect, he argued that the GOI has made progress in two main efforts: preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and promoting negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

¶3. (SBU) On Iran, Arad noted GOI efforts to apply pressure to change Tehran's bid to obtain nuclear weapons, while at the same time deferring to U.S. diplomatic efforts. He referenced a "very high level of compatibility between Israel and the international community led by the United States" in "tightening the noose around Iran in terms of economic pressure and its global isolation."

¶4. (SBU) On the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arad acknowledged those who might view 2009 as a failure due to the lack of high-level Israeli-Palestinian political contacts. However, Arad said he advised caution during the past summer regarding expectations of a breakthrough in negotiations, primarily because of what he described as a Palestinian "rejectionist position" that manifested during the Olmert administration. Nevertheless, Arad pointed to U.S. efforts to resume talks, and restated GOI interest in this regard without preconditions, as indicated by "gestures" and "various measures."

¶5. (SBU) Arad described a difficult international environment facing Israel, including a "tough anti-Israel campaign" consisting of four planes: the public information-media campaign, the legal front, the political front, and the economic arena. Nevertheless, he highlighted improved relations with Egypt, Russia, and China, and continued contacts with European leaders. Arad noted that many analysts predicted a "head-on collision" with the United States last year, which has not transpired due to the U.S.-Israeli mutual understanding. He pointed to the creation of the "Septet" -- or the seven-member inner security cabinet -- which brings experience to the national security and foreign policy arena, while affording legitimacy to consensus decisions reached by this forum. Finally, he noted the Israeli National Security Council's new role as the focal point in a strengthened decision-making process.

16. (C) Comment: Arad's foreign policy op-ed is uncharacteristic of his usual behind-the-scenes style, and would for the most part seem out of place. However, many critics panned PM Netanyahu's February 3 speech at the annual Herzliya Conference for its lack of foreign policy focus. Some critics charged that the speech resulted from Netanyahu's lack of a political vision and/or uncertainty how to proceed in a largely hostile international environment. Arad's articulation of the Netanyahu administration's foreign policy accomplishments over the past year may be in part in response to such criticism.

17. (U) The below includes an unofficial translation of the February 5 Yisrael Ha-yom article.

Begin Text:

Every Israeli Government's main effort channels involve the attempt to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear capability and weapons, and the promotion of negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. In both these channels, far greater progress than meets the superficial eye has been made.

As a prelude to a discussion of these subjects, it would be worthwhile to paraphrase the statement from bureaucratic life that goes like this: "if you reported on something but did not actually do anything - you have in fact done something; but if you have done something but failed to take credit for it - you are as good as not having done anything." In the political sphere, if something is publicized, it will not happen; and if it is not publicized, the likelihood that it will happen increases. Quite often, what does not make

TEL AVIV 00000281 002 OF 003

headlines and is not accounted for is exactly what actually happens.

The effort on the Iranian path is directed toward persuading Tehran pleasantly -- this is, after all, the U.S. dialogue policy -- but at the same time while applying pressure to change the course it is treading in a bid to accumulate a military nuclear potential and shift instead to a peaceful course.

In this path, progress has been made with a very high level of compatibility between Israel and the international community lead by the United States. In this quarter, a quantum leap is expected in tightening the noose around Iran in terms of economic pressure and its global isolation. Iran will face the following dilemma: it will have to decide whether it wants to continue to flout the world, or if it understands that if it continues this way, the price might be high.

As for the second plane -- promoting agreements and the peace process -- no doubt this entails great disappointment since 2009 was marked by the absence of high-level political contacts. Only few educated commentators and members of the intelligence community correctly predicted the current situation. When I dared, back in July, to calm down those who thought we were on the brink of intensive talks, someone immediately jumped up and called me to order for being such a skeptic and furthermore explained that I do not understand the great potential.

The potential is indeed great, except that even though this is the case, the Palestinians have assumed a rejectionist position. This stance did not begin when the incumbent Israeli Government was established. Some 18 months ago, the former prime minister made an extremely generous offer to Abu Mazen in an effort to move forward toward arrangements. The latter, however, turned him down. Six months later, Abu Mazen explained that the gaps were still too wide.

So whatever the reason for this rejectionist Palestinian stand may be -- once Abu Mazen is too strong, another time he

is too weak; once he is going to elections, or he is in a bad mood, or is awaiting the Arab League summit -- the reasons may vary, but the rejectionist policy continues, and this is disappointing.

Despite the disappointment, the U.S. has been making efforts to bring about Israeli-Palestinian talks. The Israeli Government has already announced that it was interested in this, without preconditions, and has made gestures and taken various measures to prove this.

Combined Effort

Meanwhile, a tough anti-Israel campaign is underway. It consists of four planes with reciprocal links to one another: the public information-media campaign; the legal effort; the political front; and, finally, the economic arena. More and more boycotts are imposed on Israeli products, to the point where they are burned. I do not know of anyone who is familiar with Jewish history whose guts would not churn upon watching such a bonfire.

Here Israel is required to adopt an educated and carefully thought-out strategy: create obstructive blocs when the phenomenon is negative, and support blocs when the initiative is positive, or apply the brakes.

In the past year, Israel put an emphasis on several anchors. In the region nearest to us, one cannot avoid noticing the tighter cooperation with Egypt. As far as the United States -- the superpower without which nothing can be done -- is concerned, a year ago, people prophesied that we were heading toward a head-on collision. Well, one year later, we are not at this point. Sometimes, our views differ, but this is part of a mutual understanding, as among friendly countries. In Europe, one must note the upgrading of relations with several countries: Germany, Poland, and Italy -- whose prime minister arrived here last week at the head of a group of ministers. Note the frequency of visits to such key countries as Britain, France, Spain or such traditionally friendly countries as the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. Where Brazil is concerned -- President Lula will arrive soon and his defense minister visited Israel a week ago; and with respect to Russia -- Netanyahu will travel to that country in two weeks, this time openly; and there are also China and India. In terms of relations with China, everyone, including the United States, feels it wants more.

In addition to external support, it is also necessary to have support at home. A change has taken place that not many have

TEL AVIV 00000281 003 OF 003

noticed, but as an eyewitness, I can attest to the fact that it is far-reaching in its importance. This government has established a de facto council of ministers -- the "Septet." This is the assembly of people who hold consultations in the most intensive way and it is also the most significant. The rate at which it holds deliberations is frequent, although this not done publicly, and this is where the key issues are discussed.

Who is in that group: the four heads of the coalition's major factions, two former prime ministers, and two former chiefs of staff, and all of them have held ministerial positions more than just once or twice. The "Septet" represents a broad range of views and grants decisions consensus and legitimacy.

There is further bolstering and it has to do with the staff work. It was Netanyahu, who, during his first term as prime minister, established the National Security Council. Now he has transferred the Council from a side position in the decision-making process to the focal point of the process. This strengthens the decision-making process, as required by the National Security Council Law and as demanded by various commissions of inquiry.

Faced with such phenomena as Goldstone, we encounter a comment that is a typical show of Israeli defiance: what would we rather be -- right or smart? No Israeli would ever agree to be "not smart," even if we may be able to live with the "not right." Yet when someone employs this statement to attack us bluntly, this dilemma sometimes pushes us into something that may be portrayed as smart, but which meanwhile sacrifices the element of justness.

I would like to propose two principles by which to conduct our policy. One principle is not to offer solutions that balance off being smart versus being right -- marry the two. This is the prudent way. The second principle is to exercise caution. Let us engage in less swashbuckling, avoid incitement or threats, and engage more in doing, in modesty, and in earnestness. Let us work quietly because where politics are concerned, being quiet does not mean filth but quality. All these could help us reinforce Israel because in our region, there is no alternative to strength.

End text.
Cunningham